

Message Text

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CNFO RUQMBI/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI 0134

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 0482

LIMDIS

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR QA IZ FY XF

SUBJ: AMIR OF QATAR COMMENTS ON SYRIA-IRAQ RELATIONS--
EUPHRATES' WATERS, ET AL

REF: STATE 86476 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: AMIR OF QATAR SEES PRESENT IRAQI-SYRIAN DIFFERENCES
AS FUNCTION OF IRAQI INTERNAL POLITICS. ON EUPHRATES' WATERS,
AMIR BELIEVES IRAQ WILL ATTEMPT TO DELAY SOLUTION FOR THESE
POLITICAL REASONS. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING APRIL 22 CONVERSATION WITH SHAYKH KHALIFA BIN HAMAD
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AL THANI, AMIR OF QATAR, IRAQ-SYRIA RELATIONS CAME UP IN CONTEXT

OF DISCUSSION OF US ASSESSMENT OF IRAN-IRAQ AGREEMENT.

3. ACCORDING AMIR, STEPPED UP IRAQI PROPAGANDA AGAINST SYRIANS ON EUPHRATES' WATERS AND OTHER ISSUES IS PROMPTED BY IRAQI NEED TO HAVE EXTERNAL TARGET TO INSURE INTERNAL BALANCE BETWEEN CIVILIAN AND MILITARY FACTIONS OF BAATH. AMIR SAID THAT COMPLETE REVERSAL OF IRAQI POLICY TOWARD IRAN NEEDED A QUICK "COVER" AND IRAQIS HAD APPARENTLY DECIDED TO TAKE ON SYRIANS. I COMMENTED THAT IT SEEMED INCONGRUOUS FOR IRAQIS TO TAKE ON SYRIANS AT A TIME WHEN THEY APPEARED TO BE WORKING HARD TO BREAK THEIR ISOLATION FROM ARAB WORLD, PARTICULARLY SINCE SYRIA A "CONFRONTATION" STATE. AMIR SAID HE HAD NO EXPLANATION FOR THIS EXCEPT THE INTERNAL ONE HE HAD OFFERED ABOVE. HE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT SYRIAN-IRAQI SLANGING MATCH WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO GET OUT OF HAND SINCE OTHER ARABS WOULD EXERT NECESSARY PRESSURES TO COOL THE SITUATION.

4. SPECIFICALLY ON EUPHRATES' WATERS, I ASKED AMIR WHAT IRAQI ENVOY JAWARI HAD HAD TO SAY DURING HIS APRIL 17 VISIT TO DOHA (DOHA 0463). AMIR SAID HE HAD HEARD JAWARI OUT, BUT THAT THE IRAQI HAD BEEN POORLY PREPARED AND AMIR HAD ASKED FOR MORE INFORMATION. KHALIFA SAID SYRIAN AMBASSADOR WAS WAITING IN NEXT ROOM, PRESUMABLY TO MAKE SYRIAN CASE.

5. AMIR ALLOWED THAT IRAQ MIGHT INDEED BE HURTING ON EUPHRATES' WATERS. HE SAID IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT THE SYRIANS WERE ATTEMPTING TO FILL TIAR EUPHRATES DAM RESERVOIR OVER TWO-YEAR INSTEAD OF FIVE-YEAR PERIOD ORIGINALLY PLANNED. IN ADDITION, IT APPEARED THAT MILD WINTER WITH LITTLE SNOW HAD DIMINISHED EUPHRATES' FLOW. HE SAID THAT ADDITIONAL COMPLICATING FACTOR WAS TURKISH INVOLVEMENT.

6. AMIR EXPRESSED HOPE THAT ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL PRESENTLY MEETING IN CAIRO WOULD BE HELPFUL ON PROBLEM. ACCORDING KHALIFA, SYRIA-IRAQ-TURKEY TECHNICAL COMMISSION IS BEING PROPOSED TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM, FOR WHICH THERE ARE MANY PRECEDENTS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW. HOWEVER, KHALIFA EXPRESSED VIEW THAT ALTHOUGH SYRIA WOULD ACCEPT COMMISSION PROCEDURE, HE BELIEVED THAT IRAQ WOULD NOT. AMIR STATED THAT ALTHOUGH IRAQIS MAY HAVE A CASE WHICH SOLVABLE BY COMMISSION OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL PRECEDENT, CONFIDENTIAL

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THEY WISH TO USE PROBLEM FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES, AND THUS WILL ATTEMPT TO DELAY SOLUTION. AMIR REITERATED THAT OTHER ARABS MAY LEAN ON THE PARTIES TO KEEP SITUATION UNDER CONTROL. PAGANELLI

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